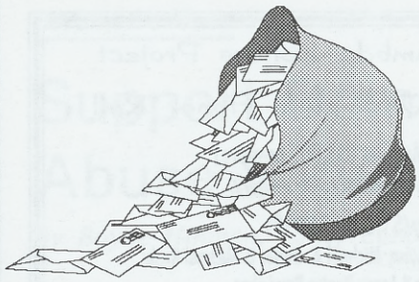

Lambda Letters Project

32640

Vol. 10, No. 5 May, 2002 www.lambdaletters.org LambdaLP@aol.com (916) 728-1261

Take Back the State

Lavender Library, Archives
and Cultural Exchange
Sacramento, CA

by Boyce Hinman, Chief Lobbyist

The April 22 edition of the *Sacramento Bee* contained two disturbing articles. One article reported that the State Legislative Analyst predicts the state budget for FY 2002–03 (which begins on July 1, 2002) will have a shortfall of $20 billion or more. Another article said the state has signed a large contract to purchase database software from Oracle Corporation. It was thought that this software would greatly reduce state government expenses. However, a recent state audit predicts that the state's expenditures will actually be $41 million higher than they would have been without the software.

A few years ago the state approved an energy deregulation plan that is widely believed to be a disaster. Then the state signed long-term energy contracts agreeing to pay super-inflated prices for electricity. Current electricity prices are much lower than the prices agreed upon in the contracts.

Can it be said accurately that the sate government is out of control? What do you think? As a result of the huge deficit, legislators and the governor will wield a powerful budget axe. Many important, established health programs face deep cuts in their budgets. Most new health programs that might cause new state expenditures will die on the floor of the legislature. Many new civil rights bills will die for the same reason.

Health programs that may affect you directly will be crippled. If they don't affect you, they surely impact the poor and disenfranchised in our state. Are you hoping for new legislation to protect the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgendered people? If it costs the state more money, you can forget about it. Don't look for increased state expenditures for AIDS care or for domestic abuse programs either.

Is it time to take back the state? There must be better people out there to run our state government. Things could improve if all Californians got actively involved in the political process. Legislators and governors get elected when people vote for them. Yet only 34 percent of registered voters bothered to vote in the March primary. Actually only 24 percent of those eligible to register and vote did so. That is appalling!

A disciplined minority, such as the LGBT community, could have a major impact on elections just by getting most of the community to vote. With so few other people voting, such a massive outpouring from our community could do wonders. The apathetic voters of California are handing us a golden opportunity. Shouldn't we take them up on it?

Massive amounts of mail to legislators really affects how they vote on legislation. Lambda Letters delivers over 140,000 letters and e-mail messages to legislators each year. I have received letters from several legislators attesting to the effectiveness of our

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Lambda Letters Progress Report

Messages Collected

March, 2002	6,846 letters & e-mails
In all of 2002	34,938 letters & e-mails

Dollars Spent

March, 2002	$3,846
In all of 2002	$10,882

Can You Help?

Please support the very important work of the Lambda Letters Project with your contributions.

Lambda Letters Project

Mission Statement

To promote people of color, feminist, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and HIV/AIDS status advocacy, and to bring people of color, women, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgendered and intersex persons, and persons affected by or living with HIV/AIDS into full participation in American society.

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The Lambda Letters Project does not sell or loan its mailing list to anyone. We give no information about who is, or is not, a member of the Project. We do, occasionally, send mailings on behalf of other worthwhile organizations, but this is done by our own volunteers so that no other organization has the opportunity to copy our mailing lists.

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If so, you may register a complaint with the Department of Fair Employment and Housing. In cases of employment discrimination, call the department at (800) 884-1684. In cases of housing discrimination, call (800) 233-3212. The person answering the phone will schedule an appointment for you at the Department of Fair Employment and Housing Office which is closest to your home or place of employment.

Advertising Rates (per Issue)

Business-card sized ads (3½"×2") $15, quarter-page ads $50, half-page ads $65, full-page ads $100, full back cover ads $150. Deadline for payment and camera-ready copy, along with your name and phone number, is the 25th of each month.

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Women's Issue

Support Domestic Abuse Services

by Boyce Hinman, Chief Lobbyist

Because of the reformulation of funding in Congress for the Violence Against Women Act, California has experienced a severe reduction in federal funding for violence against women and family violence services for FY 2001–02. Federal funding for California will stay at a reduced level for FY 2002–03. And due to economic and other external conditions, state budget sources are strained.

SB 1618 (Sheila Kuehl, D–Los Angeles) raises by $10 the portion of the marriage license fee dedicated to funding domestic violence services. Six dollars of that fee would be used to fund domestic violence shelters in underserved areas and populations. (In one of life's little ironies, because same-sex couples are denied the right to marry, they are not subject to this fee.)

As of this writing, SB 1618 lies in the Senate Appropriations Committee. Because Senator Kuehl expects the bill to be approved by that committee before you could get your letters back to Lambda Letters, we're asking you to write to your member of the Senate in support of the bill.

Here's how marriage license fees are currently used to support domestic violence services:

- Counties in California charge between $45–70 for marriage licenses.
- Presently, $23 of each marriage license fee that is collected by a county is used to provide domestic violence services, specifically shelter and other crisis-related services.
- In 2000 there were approximately 160,000 public marriage license certificates filed in California.
- Based on those 160,000 certificates filed, over $3,680,000 was made available to domestic violence programs in counties throughout the state.

SB 1618 is good legislation. Increasing the portion of marriage license fees allocated to domestic violence services by $10 raises the actual cost of each marriage certificate by the same amount. Therefore, a marriage certificate would cost between $55–80. This is a small additional price to pay in comparison with the revenue it will produce for services to victims of domestic violence throughout the state.

The additional funds provided by the $10 increase amounts to $1.6 million—nearly two-thirds of the funds

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People of Color Issue

Help People Escape Poverty

by Boyce Hinman, Chief Lobbyist

This month we ask you to write to the members of the Senate Appropriations Committee in support of SB 1264 (Dede Alpert, D–San Diego), "Aid for Dependent Children." Please send us your letter soon. The State Department of Finance predicts that SB 1264 could cost the state $800,000. In this year of severe budget problems, the Appropriations Committee will be predisposed to vote against the bill because of its cost. We need lots of letters to persuade them to vote for it.

SB 1264 makes certain important changes to the CalWORKs program in California. CalWORKs provides cash assistance to certain poor families with children. The purposes of the program are to promote economic security and the well-being of children while assisting the families in becoming self-sufficient. The problem is that a number of current rules for this program work against the program's goals.

For example, currently CalWORKs-dependent children are penalized if they win an award for superior achievement in competitive academic, scholastic, or educational events (for example, speech or essay contests). Such money is treated as *unearned income* and is counted in the month received, resulting in a dollar-for-dollar reduction in the family's public assistance grant—$100 won by a child in an essay contest reduces the family's aid by $100.

These awards for achievement can provide positive reinforcement for youths, which encourages them to thrive in their academic environment. Good scholastic achievement will help children escape poverty. But CalWORKs' current rules are a disincentive to high scholastic achievement. SB 1264 would allow

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Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender Issue

Protect Domestic Partner Inheritance Rights

by Boyce Hinman, Chief Lobbyist

In April Lambda Letters members and friends sent over 1,000 e-mail messages supporting AB 2216 (Fred Keeley, D–Santa Cruz) to the Assembly Judiciary Committee. The committee approved the bill and sent it to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, which will probably vote on that bill before you get this newsletter. However, Senator Keeley's staff feel confident that the bill will be approved by the Appropriations Committee. Therefore we are asking you this month to write to your member of the Assembly in support of this bill.

Here is why AB 2216 is so important. California has a law on the books called the "law of intestate succession" whose purpose is to regulate who gets the property of a person who dies without a will. The law lists who gets first crack at the property, who gets second choice, and how much of the property goes to each of them. The list includes those you'd probably expect: a surviving spouse, any surviving children, etc.

This law is very useful. It greatly reduces the fighting and court battles among family members and the order of priority for family members is pretty reasonable. The problem is that the list does not include domestic partners.

Assemblymember Carole Migden attempted to fix the problem last year with AB 25. However, at the last minute, she had to drop the part of the bill that dealt with intestate succession. This was necessary to get the votes needed to pass the AB 25.

This year, Assemblymember Fred Keeley has introduced AB 2216 to correct the problem. This bill adds registered domestic partners to the law of intestate succession. It puts them at the beginning of the priority list, right alongside spouses.

We think this is a good bill and we urge you to support it.

HIV/AIDS Issue

Support Healthcare for the Uninsured

by Boyce Hinman, Chief Lobbyist

We're making a leap of faith on this one, folks. SB 1414 (Jackie Speier, D–San Mateo) was due to be voted on in the Senate Health Committee on May 1. That's after our newsletter deadline but before you get this newsletter. Because Senator Speier's staff assured us that the bill will be approved by the Senate Health Committee, we're asking you to send letters to the members of its next committee, the Senate Appropriations Committee.

The deadline on getting letters to Appropriations is rather tight, so please send us your signed letters soon.

According to a report from the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, more than 6.2 million Californians have no health insurance. This obviously causes serious problems for them. However, it causes serious problems to others as well. Hospital emergency rooms are overwhelmed with people seeking medical care. Without insurance, it is often the only place they can go. In many of these cases the hospitals are not paid for the care they give.

As a result of the financial drain created by this situation, more and more hospitals are closing their emergency rooms. That means that even people with insurance, and with a genuine medical emergency, may not find an emergency room that can treat them.

It is common for people without insurance simply to go without medical care until they become seriously ill. This contributes to the epidemic spread of diseases such as tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, and hepatitis.

In the absence of a plan for universal healthcare, both private and public health insurance programs face a constant churning of their insured populations as people enter and exit these healthcare plans. The constantly changing pool of insured persons makes it difficult for public or private insurers to predict their costs accurately and the premiums or budget levels needed to cover those costs. That contributes to the risk of insolvency for these insurers.

SB 1414 seeks to remedy this situation by establishing a system in which every citizen and legal immigrant in California will have access to affordable healthcare insurance. People who currently have private insurance could stay with those plans. People with employer-provided health insurance could also stay with

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May Legislative Update

There are several important legislative deadlines this month. **May 10** is the last day that a policy committee, in a non-fiscal bill's house of origin, may vote on the bill. Policy committees are committees charged with determining if a bill makes sense from a policy perspective. For example, the Assembly Insurance Committee votes on bills relating to insurance.

Non-fiscal bills are those that would create little or no cost for state and local governments. If approved by the policy committee, these non-fiscal bills generally go to the floor of the house they are in. That Assembly insurance bill, for example, would go to the full Assembly for a vote.

Fiscal bills (those that involve significant government costs) must first be approved by a policy committee. If that happens, they then must be approved by the Appropriations Committee. **May 24** is the last day for appropriations committees to vote on fiscal bills introduced this year.

May 31 is the last day for bills to be approved by their house of origin. In other words, any bill introduced in the Assembly this year must be approved by the full Assembly no later than this date. If it misses this deadline, the bill is dead for this year.

On the status line of some of the following bills you will see that the bill has been sent to the suspense file of a committee. That simply means that the committee expects the bill to cost the state over $100,000. These bills are put on suspense and voted on later. Usually they are voted on just before the deadline for getting the bill out of the committee.

You may also see that a bill has been put on a consent calendar. This just means that everyone expects the bill to pass without opposition. They make up a whole list of such bills and then vote on all of them with one vote rather than a separate vote on each bill.

HIV/AIDS Issues

AB 925 (Dion Aroner, D–Berkeley)
Purpose: To make several changes to the laws surrounding the California Working Disabled Program (CWD). Among other changes, it would allow working disabled people to earn up to 450 percent of the federal poverty level to buy into Medi-Cal health insurance.
Status: Passed the Assembly and all necessary Senate committees. Is awaiting a final vote on the Senate floor while the author seeks the governor's support of the bill.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1423 (Helen Thomson, D–Vacaville)
Purpose: To include licensed marriage and family therapist services, and clinical social worker services, within the scope of Medi-Cal–covered benefits to the extent that federal matching funds are available, including home- and community-based services approved by the Department of Health and Human Services, for beneficiaries with a diagnosis of AIDS (or ARC) who require intermediate care or a higher-level of care.
Status: Approved by the Assembly and sent to the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. The author has not decided yet whether to pursue the bill. If she does it will not come up for a vote in committee until May or June.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1763 (Keith Richman, R–Granada Hills)
Purpose: To establish a Public Health Emergency Powers Commission with a specified membership that would be required to submit to the governor a designated public health emergency plan.
Status: Approved by Assembly Health Committee and referred to Assembly Governmental Organization Committee.
LLP Position: Neutral. No longer relates to Lambda Letters' priorities.

AB 1853 (Paul Koretz, D–West Hollywood)
Purpose: To require insurance companies to provide more adequate payment to doctors who treat people with HIV/AIDS.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Health Committee. Sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1996 (Helen Thomson, D–Vacaville)
Purpose: To require every healthcare service plan that provides prescription drug benefits to provide coverage for all medically necessary outpatient prescription drugs. The bill would allow healthcare service plans that provide medically necessary outpatient prescription drugs to require prior authorization and to establish formularies or preferred drug lists.
Status: Referred to Assembly Health Committee for a hearing on April 23. Was not voted on. Bill is being gutted by the author and given a new purpose. The bill will create a commission to study expanded healthcare coverage.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 2064 (Gil Cedillo, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To require the State Department of Health Services to authorize the establishment of training programs for counselors for publicly funded HIV testing

Continued on page 7

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Legislative Update

Continued from page 5

programs by specified community-based, nonprofit organizations. The bill would require the department to establish uniform curriculum guidelines for these training programs. Would require the participating community-based organizations to follow departmental curriculum guidelines for these training programs. Costs associated with training programs administered pursuant to the bill would be absorbed by participating community-based organizations.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Health Committee. Sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support, with some concern about the cost to community-based groups.

AB 2197 (Paul Koretz, D–West Hollywood)
Purpose: To require the state to establish a program to provide Medi-Cal health insurance to people who are HIV-positive and who qualify for Medi-Cal, except that they are not disabled.
Status: Referred to Assembly Health Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 2768 (John Longville, D–San Bernardino)
Purpose: To require each pupil to receive AIDS prevention instruction for at least four hours in junior high or middle school and four hours in high school.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Education Committee and referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 2905 (Roderick Wright, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To require HIV testing for all inmates in California State Prisons, subject to an inmate's right of refusal.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Public Safety Committee. Sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 187 (John Vasconcellos, D–Santa Clara)
Purpose: To require the State Department of Health to establish and maintain a voluntary program for the issuance of registry identification cards to qualified medical marijuana patients, and to establish procedures under which a patient with the card could use marijuana for medical purposes. *Note:* A recent U.S. Supreme Court decision stated that, in spite of Proposition 215, a person may be prosecuted under federal law for possession of marijuana. The court said medical necessity does not justify possession. So signing up for a marijuana registry card may be signing a confession to violation of federal law.
Status: Left on the Senate floor while Senator Vasconcellos seeks to persuade the governor to sign it.
LLP Position: Oppose.

SB 492 (Richard Polanco, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To require the Department of Health Services to request federal waivers so that foreign medical graduates now in the U.S. serving certain designated "health shortage areas" can remain here in the U.S. The waivers would focus on physicians who serve Medicare, Medi-Cal, low-income, and uninsured clients. It would ensure that foreign medical graduates who are serving patients with HIV or AIDS can remain here in the United States. Some of them, under their current visas, must soon return to their native country for two years.
Status: Has passed the Senate and all necessary Assembly committees. Is currently in the Assembly inactive file.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 599 (Wesley Chesbro, D–Santa Rosa)
Purpose: To require health plans to cover medically necessary substance-related disorders in the same way that plans cover any other medical condition. The only limit that may be placed on the coverage is a 60-day annual limit on non-hospital residential care. The bill would also require health plans to offer coverage for the treatment of alcoholism.
Status: Passed the Senate and all necessary Assembly Committees. Is in the Assembly Inactive file pending the author's decision on what to do with it. It's strongly opposed by the insurance industry. The author plans to move the bill in 2002, although he would not have to move it until the end of the year. A deal may be cut to mandate only the substance-abuse related benefits covered by CalPERS, the healthcare program for state workers. That program has some limits.
LLP Position: Support.

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Legislative Update

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SB 1315 (Byron Sher, D–Redwood City)
Purpose: To reduce prescription drug costs by establishing a multi-agency prescription drug buying pool in state and county governments. By buying in bulk, the central purchaser may be able to lower the per-unit cost of the drugs. The central purchaser could buy drugs for other state or county government agencies unless those agencies can get the drugs cheaper.
Status: Approved by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee and sent to the Senate Appropriations Committee for a hearing on May 6.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 1414 (Jackie Speier, D–San Mateo)
Purpose: To establish the Healthy Californians Program to provide healthcare and health coverage to all citizens and legal immigrants without access to affordable employer-based coverage. The state would be required to apply for federal money to supplement state funds dedicated to the program.
Status: Approved by the Senate Insurance Committee and sent to the Senate Health Committee for a hearing on May 1.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 1734 (John Vasconcellos, D–San Jose)
Purpose: Current law protects public entities, their agents, or employees from prosecution for distribution of hypodermic needles or syringes to participants in clean needle and syringe exchange projects authorized by the public entity pursuant to a declaration of a local emergency due to the existence of a critical local public health crisis. This bill would also protect them from prosecution for distributing materials to sanitize drug paraphernalia distributed to participants in clean needle and syringe exchange projects.
Status: Approved by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. Sent to the Senate floor for a final vote in that house.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 1785 (John Vasconcellos, D–San Jose)
Purpose: To remove the requirement that people have a prescription to buy a hypodermic needle and syringe. Also would eliminate the requirement that a pharmacist keep records of who buys them. The bill would allow a person to posses up to 30 hypodermic needles and syringes if purchased through an authorized source.
Status: Approved by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee and sent to the Senate Appropriations Committee for a hearing on May 6.
LLP Position: Support.

Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender Issues

AB 1649 (Jackie Goldberg, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To amend California's Fair Employment and Housing Act to ban employment and housing discrimination against transgendered people.
Status: Approved by the Assembly and the Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill may be taken up again this year. If so, it will start where it left off last year. Its first committee would be the Senate Appropriations Committee. The bill was dropped last year by the author at the request of the governor. He promised Goldberg that he'd fulfill most of the bill's purpose through new procedures at the Department of Fair Employment and Housing. The department has created new procedures. They are awaiting final approval from the governor.
LLP Position: Support. We are cosponsors of the bill.

AB 1885 (Carol Liu, D–Pasadena)
Purpose: To allow for a tax credit on the premium for continuing group health insurance if a person loses employer-provided group health insurance as a result of being laid of or being given reduced work hours by the employer. The tax credit would cover the premium for the insured and his or her spouse, domestic partner, and dependent children.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Revenue and Tax

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ECCO is proud to be a part of the activist LGBT community. When we work together, we can accomplish anything.
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Committee. Put on that committee's suspense file. Scheduled for a vote on May 13.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1908 (Rebecca Cohn, D–Campbell)
Purpose: To allow employer-paid, long-term care insurance to state employees and retirees enrolled in the public employee retirement system. Would also allow this insurance for their spouses, parents, and spouses' parents. Would allow employer-paid, long-term care insurance to employees and retirees of certain local governments and to their spouses and parents.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Appropriations Committee and sent to the Assembly floor for a final vote in that house.
LLP Position: Support if domestic partners and the parents of domestic partners are added to the bill. The author, thus far, refuses to add domestic partners.

AB 1942 (Judy Chu, D–Monterey Park)
Purpose: To establish a pilot anti-bias training program in the Los Angeles area. The project would focus on minors in custody or on probation, probation officers, correction officers, teachers, youth service providers, social workers, parents, and community members. The goal of the program would be to reduce hate crimes.
Status: Put on the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file. Will be voted on by that committee in late May.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 2131 (Bill Leonard, R–Rancho Cucamonga)
Purpose: To provide that if a state or local firefighting, law enforcement, or patrol member gets one of several blood-borne infectious diseases on the job, and a dependent of that person gets the disease from the person, the dependent shall be eligible to receive an award of compensation under the workers' compensation laws to the same extent as the injured person is eligible to receive an award of compensation. The award could include monthly healthcare for life.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Insurance Committee and referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support if former domestic partners added to the bill.

AB 2216 (Fred Keeley, D–Santa Cruz)
Purpose: Under the existing law of intestate succession, the surviving spouse is entitled to a specified share of the decedent's separate property that is not effectively disposed of by will. This bill would extend this entitlement to a decedent's domestic partner.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Judiciary Committee and sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 2484 (Hannah-Beth Jackson, D–Santa Barbara)
Purpose: To prevent and reduce school violence by requiring school districts to provide instruction and materials on the prevention of school terrorism through recognition and reporting prior to the occurrence of the violence.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Education Committee, for hearing on May 1.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 2777 (Joe Nation, D–San Rafael)
Purpose: To allow Santa Barbara and Marin counties to offer death benefits, optional retirement allowances, or survivor's allowances to the domestic partners of county employees and retirees.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Public Employees, Retirement and Social Security Committee for a hearing on May 1.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 1280 (Ray Haynes, R–Riverside)
Purpose: To allow churches and religious organizations to receive state and local government funds to carry out public social services. Includes safeguards against use of the funds to promote religion. Unfortunately those safeguards may not be sufficient. The funds may enhance some churches' ability to oppose gay rights and a woman's right to choose.
Status: Failed in Senate Health and Human Services Committee. Committee said he could bring it up again.
LLP Position: Oppose.

People of Color Issues

AB 5 (Thomas Calderon, D–Montebello)
Purpose: To prohibit an insurer from refusing to issue or renew insurance on a private passenger car, or other property, solely on the basis of a consumer credit report.
Status: Approved by the Assembly and sent to the Senate Insurance Committee. The author plans to move the bill, but it may not be heard in committee until May or June.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 14 (Jackie Goldberg, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To state the intent of the Legislature to examine the state school facilities program to ensure that allocation formulas reflect the current and future needs for public kindergarten to 12th grade and to examine and assess the needs of the higher educational

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Legislative Update

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system, including funding distributions.
Status: Approved by the Assembly and Senate. Assembly refused to concur with changes made in the Senate. Is in a two-house conference committee.
LLP Position: Neutral.

AB 32 (Keith Richman, R–Granada Hills)
Purpose: To create the Cal-Health program, which would provide coordination of the Healthy Families and Medi-Cal programs. The bill would authorize providers to screen and temporarily enroll individuals in Medi-Cal and the Healthy Families Program at the time the person is provided with medical care, and would require full reimbursement of the provider for services covered under those programs. The bill would require licensed hospitals, clinics, and other health facilities to inform individuals about Cal-Health and, in the case of urgent or emergency services, the bill would require that individuals be informed about the program and given an opportunity to apply after services have been rendered. The bill would expand eligibility under the Medi-Cal program to adults with family incomes at or below 250 percent of the federal poverty level, and would require the state to apply to the federal government for waivers to allow federal funds to be used in that regard.
Status: Held in the Senate Appropriations Committee. No word yet on the author's plans for the bill.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 42 (Howard Wayne, D–San Diego)
Purpose: To establish a state-funded colorectal cancer screening program to be provided to uninsured or underinsured persons over the age of 50 and with incomes at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.
Status: Held in the Senate Inactive file. Author will move the bill once he has enough votes to approve it
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1743 (John Campbell, R–Irvine)
Purpose: To authorize tax credits for the startup costs of employee pension programs offered by small employers. Would increase the annual amount that can be contributed to Educational Individual Retirement Accounts from the current limit of $500 to a new limit of $2,000 per year. These features could benefit the many minorities and women working for small employers.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Revenue and Tax Committee for a hearing on February 19. The bill was held in committee while committee members review recent amendments to the bill. No hearing date not set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

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AB 1749 (John Longville, D–San Bernardino)
Purpose: To require the governor to proclaim the third Saturday in June each year as "Juneteenth National Freedom Day: A Day of Observance" and to urge the people of California to join in celebrating this day to honor and reflect on the significant role that African Americans have played in the history of the United States and how they have enriched society through their steadfast commitment to promoting brotherhood and equality.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Appropriations Committee and sent to the Assembly floor for a final vote in that house.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1751 (Elaine Alquist, D–San Jose)
Purpose: To require high schools to offer courses of study relating to the economics of higher education and instruction on completing forms relating to student financial aid.
Status: Put on the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file. Will be voted on by that committee in late May.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1806 (Keith Richman, R–Granada Hills)
Purpose: To require the state to increase participation in Medi-Cal by maximizing to the fullest extent possible the amount of income and resources that medically needy individuals are allowed to retain for purposes of Medi-Cal eligibility. The bill would specify that its provisions would be implemented only to the extent that federal financial participation is available.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Health Committee and sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1807 (Keith Richman, R–Granada Hills)
Purpose: To require the department to develop a form for the temporary qualification and accelerated enrollment of a child in the Healthy Families Program and the Medi-Cal program. The bill would require that a healthcare provider, as defined, be reimbursed for services, and a pharmacy be reimbursed for prescribed drugs, provided to a temporarily qualified child under these provisions to the same extent and in the same manner as a healthcare provider or pharmacy providing services to a child who is fully enrolled and eligible for benefits under the Healthy Families Program or the Medi-Cal program.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Health Committee and sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1891 (Manny Diaz, D–San Jose)
Purpose: To require the Department of Housing and Community Development to establish a program to make matching grants, from money appropriated by the Legislature, to local agencies that have housing trust funds, to provide financing for affordable housing to be occupied primarily by low- and very-low-income persons and families. The bill would become operative only if the Housing Bond Act of 2002, as proposed by Senate Bill 1227, is enacted by the voters.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Committee on Housing and Community Development. Referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 2115 (Jackie Goldberg, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To prohibit public schools, colleges, and the state university from using any school or athletic team name, mascot, or nickname that is derogatory or discriminatory against any race, ethnicity, nationality, or tribal group.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Committees on Higher Education and on Education. Referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 2165 (Virginia Strom Martin, D–Santa Rosa)
Purpose: To reduce the shortage of qualified pharmacists in California, particularly in inner-city and rural areas, by allowing pharmacists from other states, who have passed nationally recognized licensing exams, to qualify to work in California.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Business and Profession Committee and the Assembly Health Committee. Sent to Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

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Legislative Update

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SB 183 (John Burton, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: The purpose has changed entirely. The bill now has to do with the classification of certain state employees. It no longer relates to Lambda Letters' priority.
Status: Approved by the Senate and the Assembly policy committee. Currently in the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Neutral. Will be dropped from next revision of this list.

SB 1264 (Dede Alpert, D–San Diego)
Purpose: Existing law provides for the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program, under which each county provides cash assistance and other benefits to qualified low-income families. Certain types of payments received by recipients of aid under the CalWORKs program are prohibited from being treated as income or resources of the family and from being deducted from the amount of aid to which the family would otherwise be entitled. This bill says that any award or scholarship provided by a public or private entity to, or on behalf of, a dependent child based on the child's academic or extracurricular achievement or participation in a scholastic, educational, or extracurricular competition may not be treated as income or resources of the family for purposes of determining eligibility under the CalWORKs program.
Status: Approved by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee and sent to the Senate Appropriations Committee. Put on that committee's suspense file. Will be voted on in late May.
LLP Position: Support.

Women's Issues

AB 130 (Tony Cardenas, D–Mission Hills)
Purpose: To expand and reorganize a state-funded family-planning program to make it a comprehensive preventive and health screening program for low-income women under 65. Would provide funding for family-planning services, but specifically excludes funding for abortion-related services or advice. Current law already prohibits spending for abortions and this law leaves that provision unchanged.
Status: Approved by the Assembly and sent to the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. Author has not decided whether to move the bill. Even if she does the bill would probably not be voted on in committee until May or June.
LLP Position: Support with reservations about the abortion issue.

AB 1860 (Carole Migden, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To provide a female victim of sexual assault with counseling regarding the risk of pregnancy and the options for postcoital contraception. Emergency contraception shall be dispensed upon the request of the victim.
Status: Approved by Assembly Public Safety Committee and the Assembly Appropriations Committee. Awaiting a final vote on the Assembly floor.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1896 (Carol Liu, D–Pasadena)
Purpose: To specifically provide that a healthcare service plan and a health insurer would be deemed to provide coverage for specified tests and procedures relating to the screening and diagnosis of ovarian cancer
Status: Referred to Assembly Health Committee for a hearing on April 23. The Committee Chair refused to permit a vote on the bill. She said the bill is a new health mandate and it should first be studied for cost-effectiveness.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1909 (Rebecca Cohn, D–Campbell)
Purpose: To allow—subject to adequate, discretionary funding from a city or county—that the superior courts in San Diego County, in Santa Clara County, and in any other county willing to participate, develop a demonstration project to identify the best practices to follow in civil and criminal cases involving domestic violence. The bill would require superior courts participating in this demonstration project to report their findings and recommendations to the Judicial Council and the Legislature.
Status: Sent to the Assembly Judiciary Committee. Hearing postponed to May 7.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1915 (Alan Lowenthal, D–Long Beach)
Purpose: To require the Department of Motor Vehicles to provide a new set of license plates to a registered owner of a vehicle who appears in person and submits a completed application and also presents to the DMV the

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previously issued plates, proof of identity and vehicle ownership, and either evidence of victimization by a domestic abuser or evidence of efforts to get assistance in regard to the domestic abuse, as specified.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Transportation Committee and put on the Assembly Appropriations Committee's consent calendar.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 2030 (Jackie Goldberg, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To require courts to waive the fee for serving a protective order, restraining order, or injunction if that order or injunction is based upon specified acts or threats.
Status: Put on the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file. Will be voted on by that committee in late May.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 2248 (Jay La Suer, R–La Mesa)
Purpose: To provide for the issue of special "choose life" license plates. The proceeds of the plates would go to nonprofit agencies that provide support and counseling for pregnant women. The counseling must not include termination of the pregnancy as an option.
Status: Was defeated in the Assembly Transportation Committee.
LLP Position: Oppose.

AB 2537 (Jay La Suer, R–La Mesa)
Purpose: To require an ultrasound to be performed on a woman seeking an abortion within 24 hours prior to the abortion procedure, and to require the ultrasound to be shown to the woman prior to commencing the abortion procedure.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Health Committee. First hearing cancelled at request of author.
LLP Position: Oppose.

SB 224 (Jackie Speier, D–San Mateo)
Purpose: To require the department of Health Services to submit a state plan amendment to the federal Health Care Financing Administration adopting the optional "categorically needy" eligibility group described in the federal Breast and Cervical Cancer Prevention and Treatment Act of 2000, thereby providing breast and cervical cancer treatment under the Medi-Cal program, subject to federal financial participation. The optional "categorically needy" described in the federal bill are low-income people being given cancer treatment, paid for by the state, but whose circumstances do not allow the state to request matching federal funds to help cover the cost of the treatment. Most of what the bill wanted was accomplished through the budget bill last year.
Status: Currently in the Assembly Appropriations Committee. Author is letting the bill sit. She may reactivate it if any fine-tuning of what was enacted last year is needed.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 390 (Martha Escutia, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To require the State Department of Education to develop a state master plan for childcare and development in consultation and collaboration with an oversight taskforce.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 564 (Jackie Speier, D–San Mateo)
Purpose: To require applicants for licensure as a psychologist; marriage, family, and child counselor; or social worker who began graduate study on or after January 1, 2004, to complete a minimum of 15 contact hours of coursework in spousal or partner abuse assessment, detection, and intervention strategies. Those who were licensed earlier than that date would be required to take continuing education courses in the above subjects.
Status: Passed the Senate. Double-referred to the Assembly Business and Professions Committee and the Assembly Health Committee. Will be heard first in the Business and Professions Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 622 (Deborah Ortiz, D–Sacramento)
Purpose: To allow the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) supplemental nutrition branch of the State Department of Health Services to issue grants to local entities to provide certain dental services and information.
Status: Approved by the Senate and sent to the Assembly Human Services Committee for a hearing on June 26, 2001. Hearing cancelled at author's request. The author has not decided whether to move the bill. The state's budget woes are a problem.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 993 (Liz Figueroa, D–Fremont)
Purpose: To require the State Department of Health Services to consult with the board in developing regulations that affect the scope of practice of a nurse-midwife
Status: Referred to the Assembly Committees on Business and on Health. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Neutral. No Longer relates to a Lambda Letters issue area. Will be removed from the next revision of this list.

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Legislative Update

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SB 1291 (Ray Haynes, R–Riverside)
Purpose: To require the state to issue special auto license plates that say "Choose Life." All proceeds from the license plates would go to non-governmental agencies that provide counseling and other services that meet the needs of pregnant women who are committed to placing their newborn children for adoption. Funds could not go to any agency that is associated with abortion activities, counseling for or referrals to abortion clinics, providing procedures related to medical abortions, or pro-abortion advertising.
Status: Referred to Senate Transportation Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Oppose.

SB 1301 (Sheila Kuehl, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: Current law states that prior to the performance of an abortion, a medical committee must determine that continuation of the pregnancy would impair the physical or mental health of the mother, or that the pregnancy resulted from rape or incest. This law instead states that every person has the right to (a) choose or refuse birth control and (b) to choose to bear a child or obtain an abortion. The bill says the state shall not deny a woman's right to obtain an abortion unless the procedure is to be performed or assisted by one not properly licensed by the state or unless the attending physician thinks the baby could live outside the uterus *and* the doctor believes the abortion is not needed to protect the life and health of the mother.
Status: Approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee. Sent to Senate Appropriations. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 1320 (Sheila Kuehl, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To revise and strengthen the definition of the crime of stalking.
Status: Referred to the Senate Public Safety Committee for a hearing on April 30.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 1365 (Jackie Speier, D–San Mateo)
Purpose: Current law allows taxpayers, until January 2003, to include an extra payment with their state income tax return and to designate that extra money to be used to support breast cancer research. This bill would extend the program until January 2008.
Status: Approved by the Senate Committee on Revenue and Tax. Referred to the Senate Education Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 1399 (Gloria Romero, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To send people to jail for up to one year or fine them up to $2,000, or both, if they fail to pay court-ordered spousal support.
Status: Failed in the Senate Public Safety Committee. Committee said the author could bring it up for a vote again. No new vote scheduled at this time.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 1618 (Sheila Kuehl, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To raise the marriage license application fee from $23 to $33. The $10 increase would fund domestic violence shelters, $6 of which would target the creation of domestic violence shelters in underserved areas and populations.
Status: Approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee and sent to the Senate Appropriations Committee. Probably will be heard on May 13.
LLP Position: Support.

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Women's Issue

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lost through federal cuts. In total, with the $10 increase, approximately $5.3 million will go to domestic violence services throughout the state. The funds generated through marriage license fees provide a stable and dependable source of funding for domestic violence programs.

Please write to your member of the Senate. Urge a yes vote for this important bill.

HIV/AIDS Issue

Continued from page 4

that coverage. However, those unable to obtain affordable private coverage would be eligible for publicly sponsored coverage through the Healthy California Program.

Employers would be allowed to play or pay. That is, they could play by providing private coverage for their employees or pay by paying a premium to the state for insurance coverage for their employees. Employees also would be allowed to choose between their employer's plan or the Healthy California Insurance plan.

SB 1414 is very important legislation. Please write to the members of the Senate Appropriations Committee and urge them to vote for SB 1414.

Take Back the State

Continued from page 1

program. I believe no other organization, even the religious right-wing, sends as many letters to our legislators so consistently.

Yet only about 55 percent of our members actually return letters to us for counting and delivery each month. Consider what our impact would be if 100 percent of our members returned signed letters to us each month!

The cold hard fact is that nothing will change as long as we remain so apathetic and uninvolved. It really does all come down to you. Are you satisfied with things as they are? If not, you can make a difference. But it requires that you become more involved in the electoral process and more involved in groups like Lambda Letters.

Can we hear from you? Contact us and ask what you can do to make a difference.

People of Color Issue

Continued from page 3

CalWORKs children to retain the income from competitive educational awards.

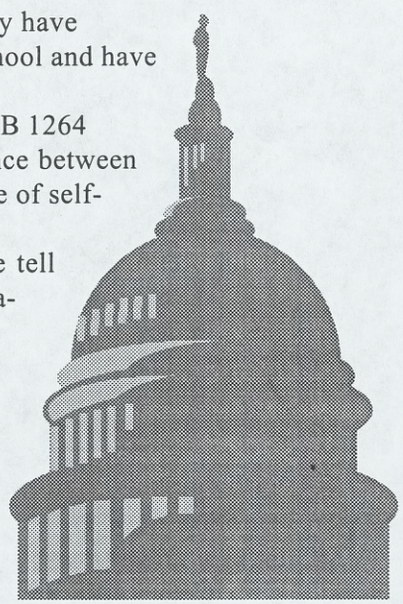
Here's another problem. The intention of current law is that CalWORKs children should graduate from high school. However, the law terminates eligibility on the child's 18th birthday. Sometimes kids turn 18 before they graduate.

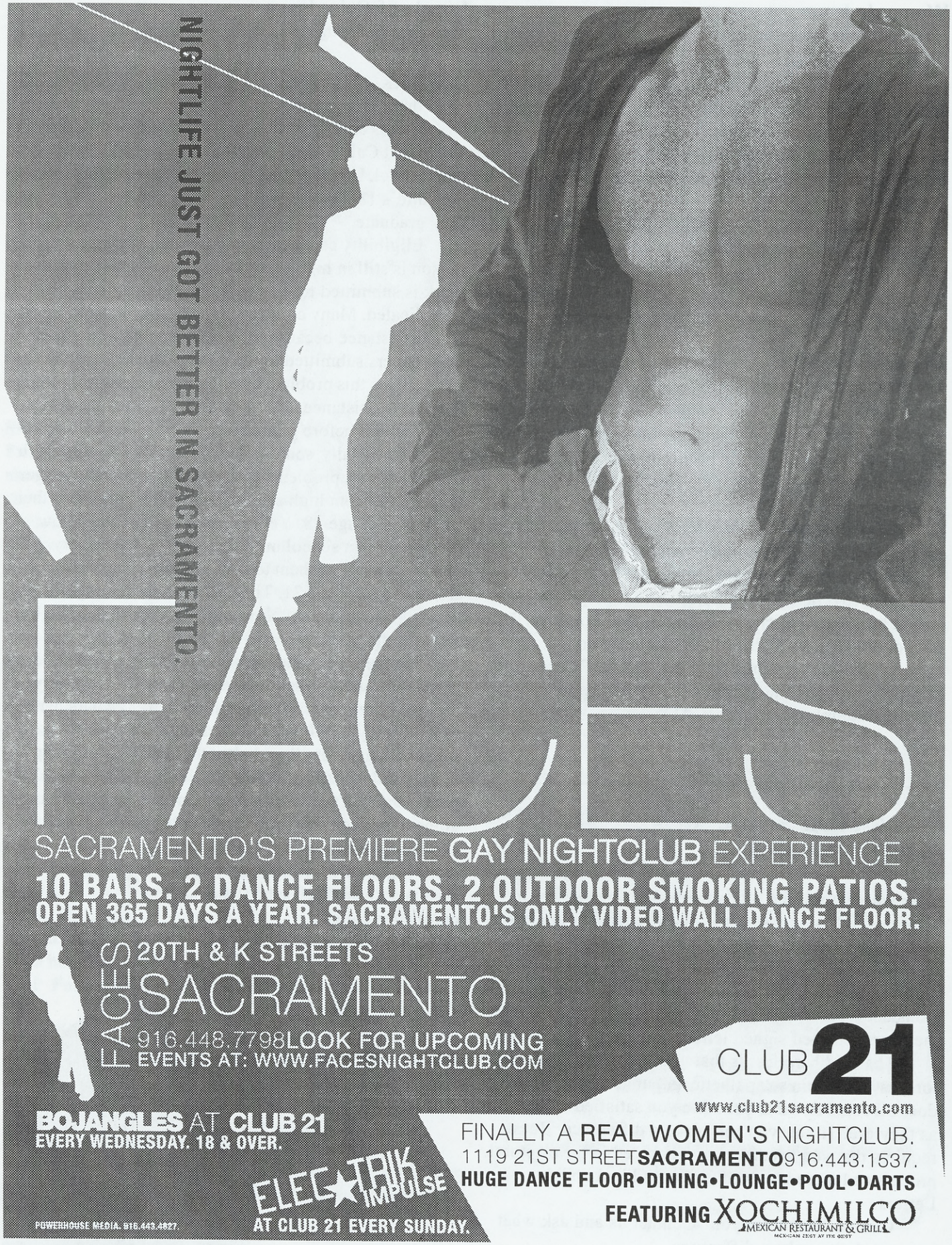
Eligibility can continue to the 19th birthday if the person is still in high school and the necessary paperwork is submitted to the program. But the process is complicated. Many children under 19 are being dropped from assistance because they were unable to get the right papers submitted to the right place on time. SB 1264 solves this problem by allowing the kids to continue receiving assistance until they turn 19 unless they drop out of school before graduation.

Additionally, some children have learning disabilities or other health problems that cause them to take longer to graduate from high school. These kids often lose their assistance at age 18. Yet many school districts allow them to stay in school until they're 21, if necessary. SB 1264 would allow them to continue receiving cash assistance until age 21. This provides them a big lift in life by giving them much-needed time to get their high school diploma.

On the other hand, some particularly gifted children graduate from high school by age 16 or 17. Generally these children must work a minimum of 32 hours per week or they will lose their cash assistance. Getting some college under their belts would do much to help these youth escape poverty. But in most cases the 32 hour-per-week work requirement prevents them from going to college. SB 1264 would solve this problem by exempting teens under 18 from the work requirement if they have graduated from high school and have enrolled in college.

For many people SB 1264 could mean the difference between a life of poverty or a life of self-sufficient, economically secure existence. Please tell the Assembly Appropriations Committee to vote for SB 1264.

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